



**KEEP THE PROMISE COALITION**  
**Community Solutions, *Not* Institutions!**  
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**Testimony before the Human Services Committee  
In Favor of SB 281  
March 02, 2010**

Good morning/afternoon distinguished co-chairs and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Cheri Bragg, Coordinator of the statewide Keep the Promise Coalition. The Coalition was formed in 1999 in response to the community mental health crisis following the failure to properly invest in a community mental health system after the closure of two of CT's large state psychiatric hospitals. The Coalition is dedicated to investment in a comprehensive, community mental health system in CT.

Keep the Promise Coalition is here today to testify in favor of SB 281, an Act Concerning Public Participation in meetings of the Pharmaceutical and Therapeutics Committee. This bill would help ensure that members of the public who are affected by decisions made by the P&T committee would have an adequate opportunity to testify and provide personal, expert testimony.

As you know, decisions that are made by the Pharmaceutical and Therapeutics Committee have very real consequences on the citizens of CT, including members of the Keep the Promise Coalition, many of whom live with mental illnesses. When issues concerning pharmaceuticals come up, it is important to hear from medical professionals, prescribers, and pharmaceutical experts. It is equally important to hear first-hand the personal effects that potential decisions might have on people who will take these medications, individual responses to medications, and the impact of limiting access to those medications.

It is this Coalition's belief, after witnessing 10 years of member testimony, that there is no substitute for testimony based on personal experience. This is true

for both professionals as well as for consumers of medications. Connecticut's own Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services was recently awarded a multi-year Federal grant to transform the system based upon input from consumers, youth and families directly impacted by that system. The Federal government recognizes the basic, but critical nature of input from people who are directly affected by services and their families as it correlates to best outcomes.

Furthermore, in other States, the Pharmaceutical & Therapeutics Committees have already demonstrated this understanding by presenting an opportunity for public input in their states' processes. This Coalition feels that moving CT's P&T Committee to be in-line with these other states would be the right direction to head in and a sound decision for CT's citizens. We respectfully ask this Committee to pass SB 281.

Thank you for your time.